Iqbal

Chapter 1 EX.P.L.O.R.E Response

The realistic fiction book I am reading is called Iqbal and it is by Francesco D’Adamo. In chapter 1 we are introduced to Fatima and the other child workers. They have to pay off debts by making carpets in a factory located in Lahore, Pakistan. It is owned by Hussain Khan. Each worker has a slate with lines. When all the lines are erased the children are free. There are other children called numskulls, who don’t finish their work on time and have to sleep chained to their loom.

The author’s purpose for writing this chapter was to introduce the reader to the main characters and where the story is going to take place. I know this because we find out who Fatima and Hussain Khan are and the author gave us a location (the carpet factory) where the events have occurred. My purpose for reading this book is to know the story of Iqbal and his crusade against *child labour*, which is a very important subject.

One key line I thought was worth remembering was “I hadn’t dreamed in months. I suspect many of us had stopped dreaming but we were afraid to admit it” (Pg.2). This line is important because it shows that the children’s daily life working at the factory is dull, mundane or boring. When they have nothing exciting or fun in real life they will have no dreams. They are afraid of admitting this because they value dreams. They believe they believe are important. If they aren’t dreaming at all then something is wrong. A place worth remembering is the Tomb. It is an underground area where kids are probably sent when they are punished. It is important because the author introduced it as a place for punishment so maybe it might be a place Fatima goes to.

               One organizational feature that hindered my understanding of the chapter was the chapter numbers. Personally I like names because they let me know what I’m going to read about and I could make predictions. It makes me more “involved” with the story. So I would rather have names for each of the chapters than numbers. An organizational feature that helped me understand the text better was the author’s very good description of the area where the children work. I think I have a pretty good vision of what it looks like thanks to the details the author provided. He described the yard and the work area very well.  
               It is kind of hard to relate to the life of a child worker because they live in very different environments than I do. One connection I made was that both I and the children have jobs and responsibilities. I have to do chores and jobs around my house and area. The child workers also have jobs but the jobs are what the child’s life is centered around. These children may work in factories or workshops. They don’t have time to play and recreate like I do.  
               One big ah-ha moment I had while reading chapter 1 was that I finally realized how the children knew about their debt. When Hussain Khan explained to Fatima what the lines on the slate represented it finally made sense to me. They represented how much debt the children have to pay off. I think it’s an effective way to represent the debt because if you used numbers many of the children couldn’t read it because they are probably illiterate. Fatima after all can only count up to ten.  One question that I have is what role will the Tomb play later in the story. I asked this question because the author made it an important place by capitalizing the “t”. It’s not a tomb, it’s **the** Tomb When it is capitalized it’s going to be important. I think it may have a role to play later in the book as a setting.